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ABSTRACT

One of a series intended for parents and other caregivers, this handbook on child development focuses on the first 2 years of life. Contents include discussions on (1) basic developmental principles; (2) physical development; (3) cognitive development and language acquisition; (4) personality development, temperament, attachment, and bonding; (5) social development and the development of social limits; and (6) major changes in physical, cognitive, language, personality, and social development. Concluding sections describe activities likely to further the development of infants and toddlers. (RH)

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The Developing Child Series

THE CRITICAL YEARS

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. . . Birth to Two

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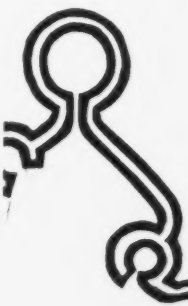

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PREFACE

This handbook is one of a series written especially for parents and other caregivers. The series includes:

What Should I Do - A handbook on Emergency Care and Safety

Kitchen Magic - A handbook on Nutrition and Cooking

Listen to Me - PLEASE - A handbook on Communication

You Can't Make Me - A handbook on Behavior Management

The Developing Child Series - Handbooks on Child Development

"The Critical Years" - Birth to Two

"The Play Years" - Two to Six

"The School Years" - Six to Eleven

"The Searching Years" - Adolescence

We have given you an overview of some of the major areas involved in caring for children. You will find these handbooks useful on your first reading as well as a ready reference for the years to come.

Children are the most precious resource our country has. As parents and caregivers, we should be knowledgeable about children and their needs.

Mary Jo Crist, B.S.
Madeline E. Ehlert, M.Ed.
Judith K. Schneider, Ph.D.

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THE CRITICAL YEARS

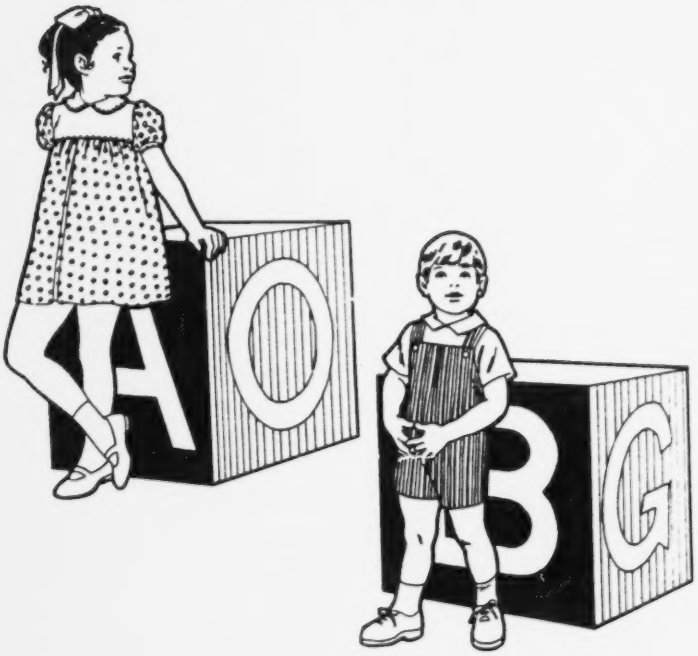
. . .Birth to Two

When one considers that the average life span is approximately seventy years, two years seems to be only a fleeting moment in time. However, in that short two year span, children grow from an average height of 20 inches at birth to a total of half of their adult height. They develop a goodly part of the language necessary for lifelong communication. They master locomtion and mobility to a great degree. They develop socialization skills that they will use throughout their lives.

Newborn babies are strangers in a new world. They are prepared for entry into the world by virtue of what they have inherited from their parents and the nine months they have spent in their mother's womb. During the first few months they will go through more changes and learning than in all the other periods of their lives. Looking at some of the developmental milestones can help us better understand some of the tasks facing children as they move down the long road to adulthood.

Understanding how human growth and development progress can provide us with the information we need to make our interactions with children supportive and successful. Because of its complex nature, growth and development has been divided into four basic areas for ease of study.

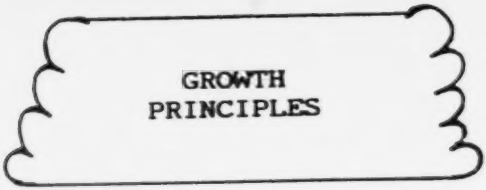
1. How the body develops (physical development)
2. How the mind develops (cognitive development)
3. How our feelings develop (personality development)
4. How we interact with others (social development)



BASIC DEVELOPMENTAL PRINCIPLES

The study of human development emphasizes two types of change - quantitative change which is easily measured and observed (changes in height, weight, etc.) and qualitative change which refers to alterations in the way we function (changes in feelings, thought processes, etc.). Qualitative changes are difficult to measure and generally take place over extended periods of time.

The words growth and development have different meanings in this context. Growth usually refers to the physical and physiological changes that occur throughout life. The greatest amount of growth takes place from birth through the adolescent years. Development usually refers to changes in functioning like language usage, relating to peers, reading skills and so forth. Developmental changes continue throughout the life cycle and, sometimes, are not as easily identified as growth changes.



There are three basic principles to remember when looking at human growth and development - the directions of growth, the order and sequence of development and the sensitive periods in development.

Directions of Growth:

1. Physical growth occurs from the top (head) of the body downward. Infants first gain control of the eyes, mouth and head. They later gain control over the trunk and limbs. Babies can move their heads in several directions before they can sit up. They can sit up before they can stand and stand before they can walk.

2. Physical growth occurs from the central (inside) areas of the body to the peripheral (outside) areas of the body. Infants gain control of the body, then the arms, the hands and finally the fingers. The same holds true for leg, foot and toe control.

3. The direction of growth is from gross (undifferentiated) to specific (differentiated). In other words, growth and development proceed from the simple to the complex. Children learn to walk before they learn to run, skip and hop.

Order and Sequence of Development:

1. The sequence of development is invariant and universal. Children all over the world follow similar developmental patterns. They all make sounds before they make words. They all crawl before they walk. They all walk before they run and, they are all little before they are big.

2. The rate at which children move through the developmental sequence varies greatly. There are many factors which influence the speed with which children mature. The two most important are the traits we inherit from our parents and the environment in which we live. We should not judge children as being fast or slow. Each of us has our own particular developmental time clock. We all grow up eventually when left to our own devices but there are some things that parents and caregivers can do to help make the process a bit more efficient.

Sensitive Periods in Development:

There appear to be certain periods of time during our lives when the potential for growth (as well as harm) is optimal. For example, young children seem to have little or no difficulty with learning a second language during the early years. When an adult tries to become fluent in another language, however, it takes them years and years of hard work. This is because the SENSITIVE (optimal) period for language development is during the early years and learning it thereafter is much more difficult.

The knowledge of WHAT is most sensitive WHEN in the process of growth and development can help us in planning appropriate experiences for children.

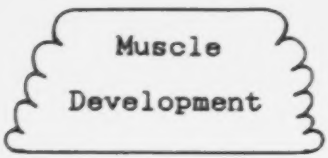
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Skeletal Development

Because the bones of the newborn are soft and pliable, they are more likely to be damaged from pressure or sudden movement. Their bones can be easily deformed, damaged or dislocated. For this reason, parents and caregivers should be careful when handling them.

CAUTION:
Dangling, pulling or swinging babies by their arms may seem alright, but much of the joint pain adults suffer has been traced back to early mishandling. Parents and caregivers should be sure that babies are held and supported without putting stress on the joints.

As children mature, their bones begin to harden and become more brittle. Some of the bones fuse with one another to form larger and more solid pieces. The bones in the skull are a good example. At first, the skull is made up of three separate bones with a small open area at the top of the head. As the bones begin to ossify, the open area becomes smaller and smaller. Finally, the skull becomes one solid piece of bone. The soft area (the fontanel) should be protected at all times since the brain lies directly beneath it.



Newborns have all the muscle fibers they will ever have but these muscles are very small in relationship to the size of the infant. Muscles continue to grow in length, thickness and breadth throughout our lives. As adults, our muscles weigh approximately forty times what they did at birth.

Infants do not have control over their skeletal (voluntary) muscles initially and so much of their early activity is involuntary. Following the principle that growth occurs in a head to toe (top to bottom) pattern, the muscles in the head and neck are generally the first to develop. It is not unusual to see young infants

stretching and straining trying to lift and turn their heads. Because their muscles are not yet strong enough to hold the disproportionate weight of their heads, they will practice over and over and over again, building strength in those muscles until they can do it at will.

CAUTION:
Parents and caregivers should be careful to support the head until they are sure that infants have enough muscle control to be able to support it by themselves. Injuries to the neck can result in severe damage to the spinal cord.

Exercise is important for infants. They need to stretch and pull, but their muscle tissue is still somewhat fragile. Babies should not be exercised to the point of becoming overly tired or overly stressed.

Gentleness is the watchword.

There are two general motor systems. The gross motor system regulates the movement of the head, body, arms and legs. The fine motor system governs the movement of the hands, fingers, feet, toes, eyes and lips. As children grow and mature, both gross motor and fine motor skills become more and more precisely controlled.

Motor skills develop in a specific order, moving from simple (undifferentiated) activity to complex (differentiated) activity. Infants initially will grasp an object using the whole hand, then the fingers and, as their motor skills increase, they will eventually be able to grasp the object using the thumb and forefinger with a pincer-like movement. Small children with small hands need small objects with which to practice.

A good rule of thumb is, "Give them something that is no larger than a fist and not small enough to swallow."

Locomotion (walking) and Prehension (reaching and grasping) are the two primary motor events of infancy. Walking is perhaps the most monumental. It signals the child's ability to move toward or away from people and objects giving them an independence they did not have heretofore. The ability to reach and grasp objects at will, rather than as a result of the involuntary or accidental encounters, gives them the basis for a wide range of skills they will use throughout life. Feeding oneself, writing, block building, dressing oneself and a myriad of other skills are all dependent on one's ability to reach and grasp things.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Development of Thought

Thinking, understanding and perceiving (using the senses to gather information about the world) are all cognitive processes. Mental development begins even before birth and continues throughout life. At birth, infants have only a few patterns of action or reflexes but, by the time they are one year old, they have learned many things.

They have learned about many of the objects in their environment (Some move. Some make noise. Some are fun to play with and others are not.)

They have learned about many of the people around them. (Some are familiar and some are not. Some are trustworthy and others strange and unpredictable.)

They have learned about certain kinds of experiences. (Playing in

the water is fun but climbing on a high slide is scary.)

They communicate their wants and needs rather effectively despite a very limited vocabulary and understand far more than most adults think they do.

By the time they have reached two years of age, they are imaginative, verbal, mobile and purposeful little people. They have a myriad of ways for getting what they want and for creating new experiences.

Learning to Think

Like most other developmental processes, cognition follows a particular sequence or pattern. Infants learn about their world and express that learning through their senses (sight, touch, taste, sound, and smell) and their motor skills. Initially, infants take in information using their reflexes (sucking, grasping, listening and looking).

Infants suck on everything that touches their lips because they do not know what to suck and what not to suck. They very quickly learn to organize their sucking responses. They catagorize objects that are to be sucked for nourishment (the bottle or breast), objects to be sucked for pleasure (fingers or or pacifiers) and objects that should not be sucked at all (a fuzzy bear or a large ball). Moreover,

they learn to suck on different things very differently (breasts or bottles require squeeze-sucking whereas pacifiers or fingers do not).

The next step in the process occurs when infants begin to respond to people and objects. Their first encounters are accidental and non-purposeful but when their actions trigger certain reactions either in themselves, others or things they repeat them over and over again in the hope of getting a similar response. They interact deligently with people or objects hoping to produce or continue an exciting experience. They have learned that other people will respond to them.

**They will chortle and laugh when someone kisses or blows on their stomach and wait, with great anticipation, for them to do it again.

Early on in the cognitive process, infants believe that when objects or people are not in their line of sight, they no longer exist. That belief changes in the next stage of cognitive development. When a three month old drops a rattle, he or she makes little or no attempt to retrieve it. In fact,

they don't even look for it because once it's out of sight, it no longer exists for them.

The eight or nine month old child will drop the rattle but he or she will look for it even though it isn't easily seen or is hidden behind something. At this stage in the cognitive process, infants become more purposeful and deliberate in what they do with the things in their world. They develop very definite ideas about what they want and what they don't want and make their feelings known in a very clear and concise way.

**Parents or caregivers may offer a toy in place of the glass ashtray they don't want to be touched, but an infant in this stage is likely to cry with rage even if the toy is one he or she usually enjoys.

Babies, at this time, also develop the ability to anticipate an event and, so, it's not uncommon to see them look with suspicion when a babysitter comes or squeal with delight when the bathwater is turned on. A young infant will spit out the food he doesn't like

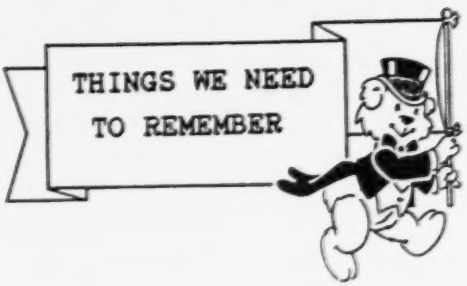
after it's in his mouth. An older infant will shut his mouth tightly before the food ever gets there.

The next step in the cognitive process involves a lot of experimentation. Rather than the repetitive activity we see with younger infants, children in this stage use a trial and error process for exploring the world. They are somewhat like scientists, constantly seeking new and different ways of doing things. It is not at all unusual to see children of this age trying out several different methods, in an attempt to reach the candy that's been put "away" because it is dinner time.

From this point, children begin to develop an ability to anticipate and solve problems without having to "see" something before they act. In other words, they can try out various actions without actually having to perform them.

**They may see the candy on the counter and realize it is too high to reach. They'll look around the room exploring the possibilities available. They may see a small box but realize it's too small without even trying it out and so they choose a kitchen chair to accomplish the dirty deed.

Accompanying this skill is an ability to make mental images and keep them over time. During this stage children can be seen doing a lot of pretending, most of which involves bathing, feeding or other simple caregiving activities.



Despite the tremendous gains toddlers make in terms of cognitive development over this two year period, their thinking and reasoning skills are still very immature.

➡ They see things only from their own perspective. They do not understand that other people may have feelings that are different from theirs or that someone else may not want to do what they want to do.

➡ They also have no understanding of cause and effect and therefore repeat many of the same actions over and over and over again, not realizing that the same consequence will occur each time.

➡ This immaturity often frustrates adults. Parents and caregivers must keep this in mind when responding to children or trying to interpret their intent.

Development of Language

Language development, just as the other developmental areas already discusssed, is sequential and children the world over follow a similar pattern and timetable. Initially, infants are born with language function (the use of sounds, gestures and facial expressions to make their needs known). Normal babies are born able to cry in several different ways.

There is a hunger cry.

There is an anger cry.

There is a frightened cry.

There is a pain cry.

It doesn't take a parent or caregiver very long to begin to recognize each of these and to respond to them accordingly. Over the first two years of life, children refine this elementary ability to communicate and

develop a good command of language structure (the words and rules of their native tongue).

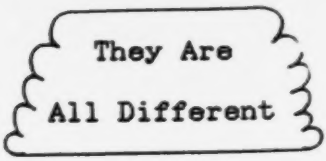
In the beginning infants' cries are mostly reflexive in nature, but they soon develop the ability to use the cries to communicate their needs to others. The cries become more controlled, based on desire rather than reflex. Infants also use gestures and body language to communicate. Nothing gets the message of joy across quite so effectively as an infant's smile. Babies also kick their feet and wave their arms to signal their excitement. Despite their lack of vocabulary, infants make their feelings known loudly and clearly.

As early as five weeks of age, young infants can be heard making cooing sounds (practicing vowel sounds over and over again, sounding somewhat like pigeons). By about five months of age, they can be heard babbling (constantly repeating simple combinations of sounds usually made up of consonants and vowels like ba-ba-ba or da-da-da).

**It is interesting to note that no matter what language parents or caregivers speak, babies all over the world babble the same sounds at almost exactly the same age.

Initially, babies babble simply because they enjoy making movement and noises with their mouths, tongues, lips and throats. Along about eight months of age, they seem to babble in response to adult talk. It's almost as though they have learned that communication is a two way process involving turn-taking. At this point, they also begin to vary the level and tone of their babbles to give them added meaning. A very loud "ba-ba" may mean one thing and a soft "ba-ba" may mean another. Attentive parents and caregivers learn very quickly what is meant by what tone and what sound.

By about one year of age, most babies will be able to speak one or two words. They are generally only understood by those who love them dearly and live with them daily, but they are definitely words from the child's perspective. Vocabulary increases very gradually and babies learn only a few words per month. By about eighteen months of age, most children have a vocabulary of about three to fifty words and by the time they are two years old, they make their wants and needs known in a reasonably precise way.



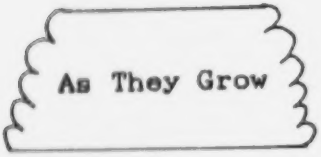
It is important to remember that, while the sequence of language development is the same for all children, the rate of development varies considerably. There will be some children who develop speech early and some who take a little more time in the process. During the first two years, comprehension of simple words and gestures and a willingness and ability to communicate are far more important for children than the size of their vocabulary.

**Language development requires interaction. It requires both a listener and a speaker. Parents and caregivers should be aware of the important part they play in language development. Listening and responding to the infant's primitive attempts at communication are important factors in language growth. Children understand words far earlier than they can speak them. The more exposure they have to spoken language, the more opportunity they have for growth.

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

The need to become complete individuals, capable of functioning separately and independently of our parents is basic to all of us. In order to accomplish this, there are a series of psychological tasks we face throughout our lifetime. The degree of success we have in completing these tasks determines, in great measure, how we feel about ourselves and our ability to cope with what life has to offer.

The very first task in the series deals with how consistently the important adults in children's lives meet their needs. If their needs are met with continuity and sameness, children become trusting. They begin to see the world and the people in it as predictable. This gives them a sense of inner security. When their needs are not met on a consistent basis, they become unsure of the world around them. This leads to a feeling of fearfulness and insecurity.

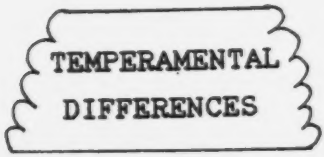


At first, newborn babies seem to be very withdrawn and into themselves. They appear to be unaware that anyone else exists in the world and most of the day is spent in a half-sleeping, half-waking state. They are dependent on the parent or caregiver for meeting all of their needs because their intellectual and motor skills are so immature. This dependency makes them feel as if they are actually fused with the parent or caregiver. Thus, the experiences they have with them affects their personality. Infants who are cradled and comforted while being fed, held close and talked softly to have a much more positive experience than those who are held rigidly, not spoken to or not held at all.

Gradually, infants begin to develop a sense of themselves as apart from the parent or caregiver. As soon as they have some locomotion skills, they begin to venture away a bit, but the distance and time is very short. Young infants will seek physical contact whereas older infants will often be satisfied just maintaining eye contact.

Toddlers have the locomotion necessary for moving far away from the parent or caregiver, but lack the

security of knowing that they can survive without them. They are torn between the desire to be independent and the fear that they cannot make it on their own. Because they are caught in the middle of two opposing needs, toddlers are often moody, angry and aggressive.



Temperament also plays a role in personality development. Part of the way we feel about ourselves is dependent on how others react to us. Infants who are easy-going and non-demanding usually bring forth loving responses. Difficult and demanding infants are usually met by frustrated, anxious and, sometimes angry adults. According to Thomas and Chess (1977) about 40 percent of the infants born are easy, about 15 percent are slow to warm up and the remaining 10 percent are difficult. There are nine different personality characteristics that appear in the first few days and months after birth.

1. Activity Level - Some babies are active. They kick a lot in the uterus before they are born, they move

around in their basinettes, and as toddlers, they always run. Other babies are much less active.

2. Rhythmicity. Some babies have regular cycles of activity. They eat, sleep and defecate on schedule almost from birth. Other babies are much less predictable.

3. Approach-withdrawal. Some babies delight in everything new; others withdraw from every new situation. The first bath makes some babies laugh and others cry; the first spoonful of cereal is gobbled up by one baby and spit out by the next.

4. Adaptability. Some babies adjust quickly to change; others are unhappy at every disruption of their normal routine.

5. Intensity of reaction. Some babies chortle when they laugh and howl when they cry. Others are much calmer, responding with a smile or a whimper.

6. Threshold of responsiveness. Some babies seem to sense every sight, sound and touch. For instance, they waken at a slight noise, or turn away from a distant light. Others seem unaware even of bright lights, loud street noises or wet diapers.

7. Quality of mood. Some babies seem constantly happy, smiling at almost everything. Others seem chronically unhappy; they are ready to complain at any moment.

8. Distractibility. All babies fuss when they are hungry, but some will stop fussing if someone gives them a pacifier or sings them a song, while others keep complaining until they are fed. Similarly, when babies spot an attractive but dangerous object and reach for it, some of them can be distracted by another, safer object while others are more single-minded.

(Taken from The Developing Person Through Childhood and Adolescence by Kathleen Stassen Berger, p. 225)

**Parents and caregivers are not solely responsible for the child's personality, but this does not mean that they have no influence on temperament. Even a very difficult infant can become a reasonably well-adjusted toddler if parents and caregivers are supportive, understanding and caring in their relationships with him/her.

The Need for Nurture

Another factor in the development of the personality has to do with the quality of the relationship between the parent or caregiver and the infant. This relationship is influenced by the personality of the parent or caregiver, the temperament of the child and the child's stage of development. During the first year, the word synchrony is used to describe the way that parents or caregivers relate to infants. There seems to be a sort of rhythm between them that is based on an intuitive sense of when the other is needy or looking for a response and when he is not.

Attachment is another word that is used to describe the infant/parent or caregiver relationship. It is the tie

CAUTION:
If parents or caregivers are preoccupied with their own problems and not responsive to the cues infants give them, the synchrony is disrupted. Only when the synchrony is "in tune", is the relationship is mutually rewarding.

that seems to bind us to another person and endures over time. When we are attached to someone, we try to be near one another and seek them out often. Infants show attachment by:

following, clinging and approaching (proximity-seeking) behaviors

or by

crying, smiling and calling (contact-seeking) behaviors.

Parents or caregivers show their attachment by responding to the vocalizations, gestures and expressions of the infant and by the ever-watchful eye they keep on on the infant even when safety is not an issue.

**Securely attached children show a readiness to allow some distance between themselves and the parent or caregiver, using their presence as a reassuring base for exploration. These children are generally curious, self-assured, and socially competent in later years where as insecurely attached children seem to be lacking in these areas.

Some of the qualities of parents and caregivers that contribute to secure attachment are:

1. a general sensitivity to the infant's need for stimulation as well as for quiet,
2. a responsiveness to the infant's specific signals such as fussing or turning away, and
3. talking and playing with the infant in ways that actively encourage the child's growth and development.

(Taken from The Developing Person Through Childhood and Adolescence by Kathleen Stassen Berger, p. 233)

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The development of our ability to interact with other people in our environment starts very early in life. We learn to act and react in ways that give certain messages to others around us.

The Social Smile

Somewhere around the first or second month of life, infants produce the most precious gift - the smile. There is, perhaps, no more meaningful experience for parents or caregivers than that first smile of recognition and love.

Infants smile for many reasons. Sometimes it is in response to a familiar object or thing, as a response to some physical stimulation such as tickling, as a response to controlling an object such as a toy or as a response to a pleasant surprise. Whatever the cause of the smile, it generally brings great delight to the

observer. Beyond being purely responsive, the smile is often used as a social means of communication between infants and their parents or caregivers.

The development of the smile as a social tool also has a particular pattern or sequence. The first phase is called spontaneous smiling and the smiles occur at random times and not as a response to any particular stimulation. Babies may smile when they are sleeping, lying awake in the crib or when being held. There does not appear to be any reason why the smile occurs.

After about the fifth week, smiles can be induced by noises, a familiar face or a moving object. As infants continue to grow, they become more selective with their smiles and by six or seven months of age, they use smiles very differently with different individuals. Parents, grandparents and caregivers may receive a broad grin while strangers are given a tentative, half-hearted smile.

**The smile is an important indicator of attachment and trust.

The Development of Social Limits

At about twelve months of age or around the time that babies begin to have some mobility, the word "no" becomes more and more a part of our vocabulary. It is our attempt at trying to set some social limits on children's behavior. In the beginning, adults use the word "no" because they are trying to prevent injury. Babies have no knowledge of the dangers life presents, and, therefore, most of the limits are set by parents and caregivers. Eventually, children develop a conscience and learn to say "no" to themselves. This process doesn't even begin to approach completion until well into the elementary years.

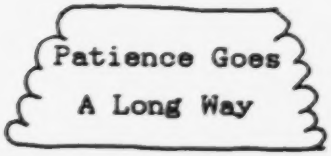
What Does the Word NO Mean to Children?

The way in which children interpret the word "no" is also sequential. Initially, children believe that the word "no" is actually the name of something they are not supposed to do or touch. Adults often

support this notion by saying, "That's a no-no."

Children then move on to understanding that "no" means something they should not do, but they generally remember it after they have already done what they finally remembered they were not supposed to do.

Next, children begin to remember that they shouldn't be doing something just at the moment they are doing it. In fact, if you listen carefully, you can sometimes hear them saying "no, no, no" as they stealthily commit the wrongdoing. Finally, children begin to remember not to do something prior to committing the act.



As it is with all developmental processes, the path toward maturity is not smooth. For each ten steps forward, there are at least two or three backward. It is important to remember that babies and toddlers have relatively short memories (a function of their cognitive immaturity) and it is difficult for them to remember things from one time to another. Understanding this lessens the feelings of frustration that parents and caregivers often feel at having to repeat themselves over and over again.

How Do Children Respond to Being Told No?

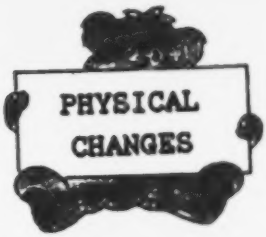
The way in which children respond to the word "no" also follows a pattern. In the beginning, children seem to respond in a relatively unemotional way. They seem to accept the limits as "just the way it is" and move on.

At about age two, this no longer seems to be the case. Two year olds want to do many adult things but can't always do them successfully. They become frustrated and so do their parents and caregivers. The word "no" becomes more and more a staple in the vocabulary of both parties. Now, however, the response is neither passive nor unemotional. It is filled with anger and frustration and very often has a physical component. Two year olds, in particular, can be seen throwing outrageous temper tantrums in response to what seems to be the appropriate setting of limits.

**Try to ignore temper tantrums if it is at all possible.

Eventually children learn to accept societal limits. Part of what influences prosocial behavior has to do with how children feel toward their parents and caregivers. Warmth and nurturance stimulate the social bond that children feel between themselves and their caregivers. This helps them to view the world as a safe and secure place. It is this perception that influences them to regard people as kind or cruel and determines the extent to which they behave either in a prosocial or antisocial manner.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTAL CHANGES DURING THE FIRST TWO YEARS



At About One to Four Months:

- Hold heads erect
- Improve hand to mouth coordination
- Increase skill in following movement

At about Four to Five Months:

- Improve hand-eye coordination
- Roll over

At About Six to Seven Months:

- Sit without support
- Bounce up and down
- Support much of their own weight when in standing position

At About Nine Months:

- Pick up things with thumb and forefinger
- Creep or slither to get about, moving three feet or more
- Pull to standing position with help of sturdy objects

At About One Year:

- Stand upright
- Walk unaided or around objects
- Take a few steps with help
- Move around freely by crawling, slithering or creeping

At About Fifteen Months to Two Years:

- Increase mobility
- Spoonfeed selves
- Experiment with prowess resulting in bumps, spills and falls
- Run awkwardly and stiffly

From Birth to About One Month:

- Increase efficiency of innate reflexes (suck on nipple more effectively)

From About One to Four Months:

- Repeat simple acts for own sake (open and close fists)

From About Four to Six Months:

- Repeat responses that bring interesting results using trial and error (Kick toy to make it swing)

From About Seven to Ten Months:

- Begin to solve simple problems (Knock down pillow to find hidden toy)

From About Eleven to Eighteen Months:

- Begin to show active trial and error experimentation or problem-solving behavior
- Try out new responses to obtain the same goal
- Curious about objects in the environment
- Modify and vary the environment

From About Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months:

- Understand that objects exist even though they are not within field of vision
- Have primitive understanding that symbols represent things
  (Golden arches mean hamburgers and french fries)
- Have primitive form of foresight
  (Realize the rocking chair is not steady BEFORE they climb on it)

At About One Month:

- Make small throaty sounds
- Crying is main means of communication

From Two to Three Months:

- Exhibit interest in sounds and voices
- Make cooing and chuckling sounds
- Respond vocally when parent or caregiver approaches

At About Four Months:

- Make many different kinds of sounds (squeals, gurgles, laughs out loud)
- Smile, squeal and coo when spoken to
- Seem to "talk" to objects

From About Five to Six Months:

- Turn head toward sounds out of visual field
- Express displeasure in ways other than crying (shrieks and howls)
- Make vowel sounds

From About Seven to Eight Months:

- Make vowel and consonant sounds (da-da, ma-ma, ga-ga)
- May respond to "no-no"
- Use gestures to communicate

From About Nine to Ten Months:

- Combine syllables
- Pay attention to own name
- Say and understand da-da
- May use two other words
- May respond to "no-no
- Imitate noises (coughs, tongue clicks, kisses)

At About Eleven Months:

- Say ma-ma and da-da with meaning
- Shake heads and say "no"
- Follow simple commands

At About One Year:

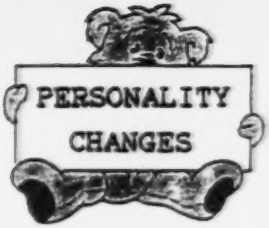
- Imitate some familiar words
- Use some other words in addition to ma-ma and da-da
- Understand simple requests
- Can point to picture or object on request

From About Twelve to Eighteen Months:

- Increase size of vocabulary, usually names of familiar people, objects or activities
- Chatter non-verbal sounds or jargon using inflections of adults
- Understand far more than they can produce
- Can point to familiar objects, people and body parts
- Listen to rhymes, songs and interesting repetitions of sounds for short periods of time

From About Eighteen Months to Two Years:

- Continue to increase vocabulary
- Use less non-verbal jargon
- Try to use words to make their needs known but do not carry on conversations
- Begin to use pronouns, especially me and mine
- Combine two and three words to express an idea (Daddy gone, Want drink, Go bye-bye)
- Use inflection and intonation to extend meaning
- Listen to simple stories, preferring to repeat those already heard
- Carry on "conversations" with themselves and with dolls



From Birth to About Eight Months:

- Begin process of differentiation (separation) of self from mother
- Develop feelings of trust or mistrust in ability of others to meet basic needs

From About Nine to Twelve Months:

- Become upset when they realize that mother is not physically present because they still do not see themselves as separate individuals (Separation Anxiety)

From About Twelve to Eighteen Months:

- Become somewhat less dependent on parent or caregiver due to increased mobility and more efficient fine and gross motor skills
- Increased awareness of self as separate from others
- See all things from their own point of view

From About Eighteen Months to Two Years:

- Begin peer interactions but are still self-centered
- Have growing sense of selves as separate persons
- Feel pulled by desire to be independent and need to stay close to parents or caregivers
- Want to do most things by themselves and their way

From Birth to About Two Months:

- Non-social
- Basically passive and withdrawn

From About Three to Four Months:

- Smile and laugh in response to others
- Recognize familiar faces
- Show some attachment to parents or caregivers

From About Five to Seven Months:

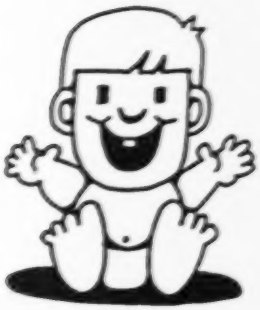
- Show interest in others
- Respond to facial expressions

From About Eight to Twelve Months

- Cry when parents or caregivers leave room
- Imitate facial expressions and gestures
- Play "pat-a-cake" and wave "bye-bye".
- Shy with strangers

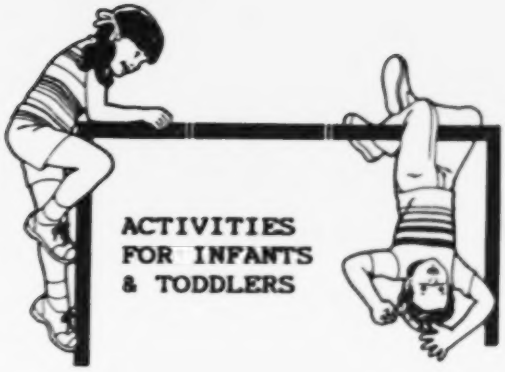
From About Twelve to Eighteen Months:

- Aware of other children but do not play with them
- Try to push them around in much the same way they do objects
- Show ownership of certain possessions
- Offer toys or things as means of social contact



From About Eighteen Months to Two Years:

- Like to play near other children but still don't play with them
- Begin to fit into family routines of feeding, dressing and toileting
- Seek adult commendation for correct behavior
- Show signs of affection, pity and guilt
- Begin to become aware of feelings of others but they are still very self-centered



Perhaps the most valuable contribution parents and caregivers can make toward the healthy development of children is to provide them with the kinds of settings, materials and resources that support their growth. Stimulating and enriched experiences and environments for very young children cannot speed up the developmental process. The rate of their growth and development is determined by their genetic heritage as well as their environmental circumstances. Environment becomes increasing more influential in growth and development when it is lacking in appropriate stimulation and nourishment. Normal genetic growth patterns can be significantly retarded by malnutrition, isolation and lack of experience or exposure. This makes the need for enriching and stimulating environments even more critical.

Babies want to learn. They are interested in what is going on around them and they are easily encouraged to be curious and active. Activities should be woven into the framework of the daily routine. Don't push or overload them. If they are enjoying something, don't interrupt them. Babies and small children learn from repetition. We become bored with something long before they do. They should not be forced to change activities just because we think it is time for them to do so. They should be allowed to have repeated experiences with an activity in order to satisfy their curiosity about an object. Their attention span is longest when they are allowed to follow their own rhythm and interest.

**It is important to keep in mind the fact that babies are individuals in their own right. They have their own likes and dislikes and their own individual needs just as we do. If someone isn't "in the mood", whether baby or adult, they should not be forced to engage in an activity. They also should not be required to do something they don't enjoy. Activities should be fun for everyone involved. Warm feelings of excitement and comraderie are what count.

Learning activities should be appropriate to individual developmental levels. Activities should be broad enough to allow each child to experience a fair amount of success. In planning activities, you should keep the following in mind.

1. Children should actively explore the environment through sensory experiences (taste, smell, touch, sound and sight).

2. Children should develop skills which will allow them to become independent of adults.

3. Children should develop skills for communicating feelings and needs effectively.

BIRTH TO ONE YEAR

Supporting Physical Development:

Babies develop coordination through practice. Almost from birth, you can play exercise games with them. Move their arms and legs, hold them in sitting --and later standing -- positions. Hold them in your arms and dance to music. They will enjoy the feeling of motion, rhythm and the close contact with you.

As they develop some control over their back and neck muscles (at about three months), prop them up into a sitting position for short periods. Bright, attractive toys will encourage them to reach out and practice their grasping skills.

At about six months, when they begin to crawl, roll, scoot or get from one place to another in some fashion,

place them on a rug or blanket. Be sure it doesn't slip or roll up under them. Encourage their movements by placing a favorite toy just slightly beyond their reach. If they become frustrated, comfort them and try again a little later.

Encourage them to pull up on the crib rail or on furniture that is sturdy and safe. Six month olds love to stand and bounce and practice their newfound skill. Walkers are a good means for helping infants learn to coordinate the movement of their legs. They love being able to move independently. Their movements are somewhat uncontrolled (they often look like they've been sipping on some scotch) so parents and caregivers need to keep a close eye out for dangers. Short periods of time in the walker are best.

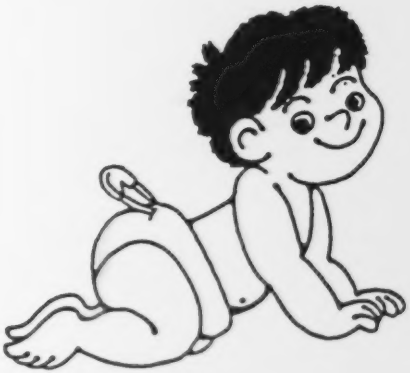
Babies vary widely in terms of the ages at which they begin to walk. Don't be too anxious. There are many skills that must be developed before children can walk. Balance, coordination of leg movements and visual skills are only a few.

Children cannot be pushed into walking. They must be ready. When you see them standing firmly on their feet while holding on to something, take both of their hands in yours and squat in front of them. They will take a step if you pull them gently toward you. Make a game out of it, encouraging them all the while. Be available to comfort them if they fall

and hurt themselves and praise them generously when they succeed.

Fine motor development should also be encouraged. When they are about two or three months old, put a small, safe toy that is easy to grasp (a telephone-shaped rattle or the like) into one hand several times each day. This will help them develop their fine motor muscles and coordinate the movements of their fingers. Vary the toys and objects you give them in order to provide for a variety of textures, shapes and sounds. Later they will begin to reach out and grasp the objects on their own.

Squeeze toys can be made from pieces of worn fabric sewed together and stuffed with old nylon stockings. Doughnut shapes are easier for small hands. Do not use buttons or other small things for decorations. Young babies suck on everything and the decorations might accidentally break off and be swallowed.



At about eight months, begin to help them feed themselves. Small pieces of cracker are good to use in the beginning. At first you will have to place it in their hand but, gradually, they will begin to pick it up by themselves, first by scooping it up with the whole hand and then by using the fingers only. Let them finger-feed themselves even though it is messy. They need practice in using the thumb and forefinger grasp and feeding themselves is a wonderful way to do it.

Once they have learned to finger-feed, you can begin to introduce them to using a spoon. Let them have an empty spoon to play with while you feed them. Eventually they will imitate what you do and begin to fill it with food. This supports both hand-eye and small motor coordination. You can encourage using a cup in the same way. Starting with an empty cup gives them an opportunity to practice handling it before it is filled with liquid. When you introduce liquids, be sure to use only small amounts at a time. Controlling the flow from the cup is another skill that will have to be practiced before success is assured.

Supporting Cognitive Skills:

Babies take in information about the world through their senses. They look at, touch and taste every object with which they come into contact and are delighted when they hear it make a noise. Their attention span is very short and, often, after exploring an object they will reject it and look for something new.

When babies chew on a toy to see how it feels and tastes, bang a cup on a tray to see how it sounds or open and close a box to explore the relationship between the parts, they are learning something about how to learn more. Parents and caregivers should provide them with toys that encourage handling. Through sensory exploration they learn about size, color, shape, texture, movement, position and sound.

Don't limit their world to "toys." Pots, pans and old cereal boxes can spark their enthusiasm. Their sense of touch can be stimulated by silk, old towels, rough cotton, wax paper and so forth. Let them feel bricks, sidewalks, grass, leaves and tree trunks.

** Set limits only to protect them from danger -- not from getting dirty.

Bathtime is another good activity for learning about the environment. Don't rush it. Nowhere else can they get the same feeling of hard, soft, wet, dry, warm and cold. Provide them with plastic containers of different sizes for pouring and filling. Fill and cap others with different food coloring. These are relatively inexpensive ways of providing them with experiences in volume and color. Be creative. You are only limited by the bounds of your imagination.

Peek-a-boo games delight babies and help them develop their skills of observation. Moving bright objects from side to side or in a circle will stimulate visual interest in very young infants. When they are a little older (three to six months), move the object so that they have to move their heads to follow it.

Mirror games are fun for everyone. Show them their eyes, nose, and mouth, saying the names as you do so. Show them your own eyes, nose and mouth and let them compare your reflection in the mirror with your actual face.

Always talk to them about what you are doing. They won't understand many of the words in the beginning, perhaps not any of them, but they will eventually begin to associate the sounds with meaning. Talking also stimulates their auditory (hearing) skills. Raise and lower your tone and vary your inflection. Gently shake a rattle and see if they turn toward the sound. The sources for sound variety are endless and the more experiences children have with sound, the more skilled their auditory sensitivity becomes.

Stop and start games are also fun. Move and shake an object rapidly in front of the baby. After moving it up, down, back and forth and around about a dozen times, stop it suddenly in front of them. They will show surprise when the action stops and show interest and anticipation when it starts again. Vary the length of time between the stops and starts to keep their interest level high.

Plastic balls are fun when babies are learning to creep. They can push them easily and then creep after them. Activity boards and "busy boxes" are also exciting. Simple household objects such as door knobs, light switches, roller skate wheels, cabinet latches and so forth can be attached to a board for an older child.

Supporting Social and Emotional Development:

Respect for children leads to respect for others and it should begin early. Realizing the individual nature of each child is a good way to start. As babies grow, they begin to recognize parents or caregivers as the basic source for meeting needs. Therefore they are more secure when the parent or caregiver is around especially in a new or strange situation or environment.

Show your affection by talking to and hugging them. When they respond to your appearance with a smile or gurgle, tell them how much you like their smile and smile back. Letting them know how happy they make you feel gives them a sense of satisfaction. When going to pick a baby up, smile and speak softly to get their attention. They will generally begin to coo and gurgle. They are trying to talk with you and responding with a smile and some conversation is wonderful reinforcement.

Try to look directly into their eyes when holding them. They are limited in the size of their field of vision and eye-to-eye contact is very important. It helps babies learn to focus their eyes for longer periods of time and is one of the first ways in which babies resond socially. Encourage them to smile at you by gently tickling their tummies or chins and when they respond, be sure to respond back to them.

Play games by changing your facial expressions. Frown, wink, laugh, open your mouth wide or run your tongue back and forth over your lips. They may try to imitate your expressions and begin waiting for you to change expressions before giving you a big grin.

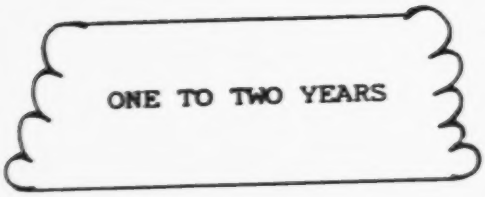
Infants love to watch other people. Let them watch you doing chores and talk to them while you work. Let them know through your talk and your facial expressions that you are glad they are around. They don't always understand the words, but they have an uncanny skill for reading body language.

To encourage self identification, games like "Where's Johnny" or "What is Your Name" are fun. Answering back with their names will quickly teach it to them. It is important to call them by name often and to use the same name each time. Repetition is basic to their learning. As they get older,

they will learn other people's names and begin to realize that they are separate from them.

Children's self esteem is tied into how much control they feel that they have over their world. Therefore, they should be given many opportunities for succeeding in tasks on their own. When they fail to accomplish them (trying to walk even though they fall down each time or trying to sit down after they've pulled themselves up and can't), they should be praised and encouraged for trying.

Trying and taking a risk are basic to learning and parents and caregivers should be sure to reinforce and praise each attempt whether it is successful or not. Self-feeding, bringing an object when asked, clapping hands and waving bye-bye are only a few of the many things an older infant can do. The opportunities are limited only by our own creativity.



Supporting Physical Development:

There are many ways to encourage large muscle coordination with toddlers. Pull toys are particular favorites at this age. If they make noise -- much to the dislike of parents and caregivers -- all the better. Variety, again, is only limited by one's imagination. Putting two or three objects such as spools, small boxes or metal jar caps on a string, knotting each object a few inches apart, can make a wonderful train. Empty shoe boxes, strung together with strong cord or string can make cars, boats or trains which are light and can be pulled when empty or full.

Let them walk up and down stairs. Help build their confidence by letting them jump from one step or jump over

things. Help them by holding one or both of their hands when they first begin to try these activities.

Show them how to climb through a small loop, under a board, under a table or between two chairs. Varying the amount of space in which they have to move, will exercise these muscles in many different ways.

Give them a plastic hammer and a pounding bench to develop arm and shoulder muscles as well as hand-eye coordination. At first, they pound with the whole arm but eventually they begin to use the wrist.

Dirt, sand and water are always favorites. An old tire makes a good sandbox. Strainers are great for sifting. Spoons and sticks plus pans and boxes can provide an endless variety of experiences. Be sure they are dressed in old clothes. The freedom to stir, dip and spatter is an important part of learning.

A long piece of cardboard on a gentle slope makes a fine but safe slide for little ones. They can slide head first, feet first or on their stomachs and be perfectly safe doing so. Children enjoy freedom of expression and an opportunity to experiment with many different sensations.

To encourage fine motor coordination, let them draw with large crayons. Initially they will have some difficulty in holding them but they will soon figure out how to do it. Grocery bags, pieces of cardboard or wrapping paper can provide a large enough surface.

**Remember, making the picture is much more important to them that the finished product. Don't tell them <u>how it should look</u> but rather <u>how it does look</u>.

Balls have many uses as well as sizes. Even one year olds enjoy sitting down and rolling a ball back and forth with an adult. Large balls are great for kicking and rolling at first. Later on, small balls can be thrown and caught.

Blocks and and other types of building toys are an endless source of fun and learning at this age. Blocks provide a wide variety of opportunities for learning balance, shape, and size. They are limited only by the imagination of the user. Their benefit to hand-eye coordination and small motor function is enormous.

**Parents and caregivers should not organize the children's play nor should they have preconceived ideas for how things should turn out. Children need to feel that their efforts are adequate and appreciated.

Supporting Cognitive Development:

In the early years, children learn by imitating. Their mobility is limited and the opportunities for learning dependent on the environment in which they are placed. Much of what they learn comes from the interactions they have with their parents and caregivers. Sitting and talking with them is very important. Asking them what they see and encouraging them to point it out stretches their thinking and observing skills and reinforces their language skills.

Hiding games are fun for this age child. Hide objects in several places, leaving just a small part exposed. This supports their whole-to-part

understanding as well as their skills of observation.

Encourage them to ask for things by asking them to tell you in words what they want. If they don't know the word, say it for them and ask them to try to repeat it. Use the names of the body parts when talking to them. Begin to talk to them about the sameness and the differences in various things (color, size, shape).

Point out things that are in the environment and ask them to point them out to you. Always name the objects you observe with them, so that they hear the name and can relate it to something that they can see, touch, hear smell or feel.

Begin to give them words that describe distance and movement like under, near, far, in, into, out, away, next to and so forth. Simple directions like "Can you bring me the block that is next to the chair?" can be made into games, providing a good source for fun and learning.

Toward the end of this two year period, children begin to ask questions. They are curious about anything and everything. Try to be patient with them and answer their questions. When they misunderstand, try using different words to answer the question. Sometimes adults don't realize how really limited their thought processes are.

Discrimination activities are helpful in supporting cognitive growth. Label the cabinets and toy boxes with picture and words. Have things organized according to size or color. Give them a lot of opportunities to recognize how different things feel, taste, smell and sound. Help them begin to observe differences in visual stimuli (light and dark, bright and dull, day and night, etc.). All of these skills support later learning especially reading.

Recall activities are lots of fun. Ask them to imitate words and actions through songs and fingerplay. After reading a story, see if they can recall the sequence of the story and some of the characters names. Put a group of objects in a bag and see if they know what some of them are without looking. Then remove one and see if they can remember what the remaining ones are.

Young children love to be read to. They love the closeness and feeling of security. When you are reading to young children there are several general rules to remember.

1. Be sure they can see easily.
2. Be sure the illustrations are large and colorful without too many small details. Books, with pictures only, can be a rich source for truly creative reading experiences.
3. Be sure to remember, the younger the child, the simpler the pictures and content should be.
4. Be sure the story is short enough to hold their attention.
5. Be sure the words are simple enough to be understood.
6. Be sure to allow some time for talking about the story and how they feel.

There are many things we want children to learn from a reading experience. Some of them are:

1. concepts about print and the fact that the symbol gives us meaning.
2. observation skills which allow some interpretation of the story from the illustration.
3. left to right orientation.
4. reading occurs from left to right and from the top of the page to the bottom of the printed page.
5. actions follow a particular sequence.
6. reading is fun and and pleasurable.
7. reading gives information.

Supporting Social and Emotional Growth:

Children at this age are becoming aware of themselves as individuals. Call them by their names frequently. Talk about the clothes they are wearing and about the color of their eyes and hair.

During this time, they will begin to learn to dress themselves. It is important to appreciate their early efforts, even when they do not turn out perfectly. They may be interested in pulling off their socks but cannot seem to manage the heel. You can start the sock over the heel and let them pull it off the rest of the way. Self esteem comes from their feeling in control of their world and dressing oneself is a

step in that direction. They need to take small steps from task to task and they need a lot of praise from the adults they love.

Children are fascinated by adult activities. When they begin to imitate these activities, they acquire new skills and an increased sense of competence. Give them ways to help you. This will increase their feelings of self worth and make them feel as if they are making an important contribution to the family. Something like putting the napkins on the table can go a long way toward making an eighteen month old feel like a "big helper." It is important to involve children in the daily life and care of the family. They need to feel not only a sense of belonging to but also a necessary and productive part of the family.

Children, at this age, love to go for trips, rides, walks and so forth. During the outings, talk about what you see and allow them to talk with other people. Unfortunately, the world is not an ideal place in which to grow. Not everyone is kind and friendly and good. Children need help in recognizing when people do not have their best interests in mind. Talk to the children about not going with strangers without asking you first. Try not to frighten them since we don't want to stifle their curiosity or make them feel as if ALL people are bad.

This is the age of imitation. It should be used to help children feel good about themselves. Parents and caregivers who provide respect and understanding for children lend much to supporting the growth of competent, self-assured and loving future adults.

Notes and ideas
of your own.....

Notes... cont....

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